

Mrs. Barbour: What are ya'll doing?

Billy Watkins: Uh, just a personality profile kinda thing, uh, a feature, more or less, just to let people get to know you a little better. Just a harmless feature is the way I can put it...best way I can put. Nothing political, nothing anything like that, it's just about you and your views as First Lady, uh on being First Lady and I want to talk to you about your Katrina stuff and

Mrs. Barbour: What are ya'll talking to her about?

Billy Watkins: I'm sorry?

Mrs. Barbour: What are you talking to her about?

Mrs. Barbour: Uh

Mrs. Barbour: I mean I'm wondering why it's about the wives, why are you doing this feature about wives?

Bill Watkins: I don't know, it really came up as a ...Ronnie Agnew came up with the idea as a kind of a story about the changing role of the First Lady, and then it sorta came down to -- well why don't we just you know, break it into two stories, one of each and do it like that, and to be honest with you, I had the choice of doing either one, and I chose you, because I've been wanting to do this story for a long time, especially right after Katrina and all that.

Mrs. Barbour: Well, I wish you had called.

Billy Watkins: Well, uh, yeah, but I'm glad I am now.

Mrs. Barbour: Well, I appreciate that.

Billy Watkins: Well, I appreciate you taking time to do this.

Mrs. Barbour: You know, we haven't had a First Lady in a while.

Billy Watkins: I wanted to ask you -- that's one thing I did want to ask you. From everything I've read and everything, you and Mrs. Fordice were pretty good friends, is that right?

Mrs. Barbour: We were, and you know we had been for years, just because of the Republican Party and the high profile that Haley and Kirk had in the Party, so we were friends for a long time, and then afterwards she gave me some really good advice, and that was to just take your time on things and be diligent about things you lend yourself to, to really study the things and see what they are like and see if it's something that you really want to put yourself into, because there is a lot of responsibility that goes with the

title, and I don't think I realized what the title meant, but you do get uh, you do get a lot of, you inherit a lot of, a lot of, I guess you would say (what do you say, Pete) you inherit a resume, and you do inherit a lot of – I don't want to say – it's just a lot of respect for the title, and that's something you have to be diligent with and careful about how you use it. I mean I personally like to go everywhere as Marsha Barbour, but there are times that being married to the Governor has actually worked toward helping people, and that was during Katrina. I couldn't have ever gotten into FEMA without being married to the Governor, so I used the title First Lady down there a lot, but to get things done – in order to get things done. And that's when it dawned on me that there is a lot of – you just need to respect the title and the position.

Billy Watkins: Well, you know time and history has strange intersections some time, and I just wonder have you thought about why in the great Master Plan that we have here on earth – why Katrina and why the Barbour's – why did they intersect.

Mrs. Barbour: I have thought, I really have...a lot of people that really know me and knew me during the campaign, knew that I was not real excited about Haley running. He had always worked in Washington or worked doing political stuff, and I could just take part of it, but I still lived a normal life in Yazoo City and had a quiet, private life. So, I kinda fought God and Haley the whole step of the way, but when I realized it was something he was serious about, and the state really needed his leadership and he really had a lot he could offer the state and he was determined to do it, then I promised him, because of my faith in God, and in Haley – Haley's ability – that I would try to be a good sport, and that's all I promised, and after he was elected, I made the same promise, that I would try and be a good sport. So God, you know, as far as a plan in your life, won me over in that respect, and I don't how you're going to write this, I need to read it before you write it.

Billy Watkins: I'm going to write it exactly the way you say it, I promise you.

Mrs. Barbour: But, um, anyway, so the way I started out in the job was to try and use some of Pat's advice, and I felt my way through it, and the only way I could make any calls or judgments about anything was to learn about them, so for the first year and a half, was sit in policy meetings. I would go every meeting I can with any agency, from Medicaid to Education to law enforcement, anything with Bureau of Narcotics, with Highway Patrol, just trying to learn any – particularly in education and in the agencies that came under Haley, uh Community Colleges, you know I always leaned toward, I learned about early education and the importance of early childhood education, I learned a lot of --- just about a lot of things. And then when --- there was a whole first year and a half of me trying to learn all about state government, about policy and that's how I took this role on, and I took it on as a job and trying to learn about it. So that's how I got started in it and what ended up happening is it – I prayed every day because I've never managed an office. I worked before Haley and I were married and I worked for almost a year after we were married and from then on I managed our household and our children because he traveled a lot and was involved in things that took him out of town a lot, so....

Billy Watkins: What kind of work did you do before that.

Mrs. Barbour: Well, I graduated in business and I worked at a stock brokerage firm and then my first job after Haley and I were married was with Thad Cochran's first campaign for Congress.

Billy Watkins: Ok.

Mrs. Barbour: So I understood politics – I don't know if you ever understand it – but I've lived with it all of my life because – all of my married life – and dating life. So anyhow that's kinda how I got started and then I tried to ask God to use me in some way to make a difference while Haley has this job, and I did not know that I would end up in Hattiesburg and end up on the Coast the day of Katrina. I didn't know that. I just knew that we had had two other hurricanes since Haley had been Governor and I did not want to sit around and watch The Weather Channel all day and go with him to press conferences. So, I felt like Katrina – I don't know what it was – everything about it that happened was different from the others. We pulled our pontoon boat in – George Phillips who is Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety had asked me did I want to go down to – to fly over the Coast to see if people were evacuating – it was the first time we ever had contraflow – I thought contraflow was something about drugs! I didn't know what it was when I was sitting in the meeting. You know so I had to learn what it was the first time we had had actually an agreement with Louisiana to control our traffic. So, you know, I've had a lot of first in the past four years. And this was something that, with my personality, and wanting to do something different, and feeling like sometimes – Haley and I can cover more ground if we are separate and we worked as a team the whole time that he has been running and the whole time that he has been Governor so I thought, well, I can go see how the contraflow is doing with Commissioner Phillips. So I flew down over the Coast on Sunday afternoon late in a helicopter and had just an eerie feeling in my stomach that I would never see the Coast again.

Billy Watkins: Really?

Mrs. Barbour: Yes, yes. So that was Sunday night. Monday, George had asked me would I like to go down and thank the people that were staged in Hattiesburg, our first responders and our Guardsmen. I didn't know what staged was. I thought, well, whatever it is, I think I'll go down and thank them. I know what first responders are, but I didn't know it was 100 of them, I didn't know it was 800 National Guardsmen, but they were – I learned a lot that day just by going down there. So at 6:30 in the morning when Haley left to go to a press conference about the hurricane, he said, well, are you going with me? And I said, no I'm not, I'm going down to thank the men and women that are in Hattiesburg. So that was how that happened.

Billy Watkins: And that was on a Sunday?

Mrs. Barbour: Sunday night I went down just to check the contraflow.

Billy Watkins: Ok.

Mrs. Barbour: Monday morning at 6:30 I left – when he left to go do his press conference, I left to go to Hattiesburg. And I would venture to say that we were about the last car that made it to Hattiesburg.

Billy Watkins: When ya'll flew over the Coast that day and you had that kind of feeling, were ya'll in a plane, helicopter?

Mrs. Barbour: In the Highway Patrol helicopter, and we could tell that there were a lot of people that were not even boarded up, that were not leaving, the highways were not as crowded as we thought they should have been. You know Katrina had been predicted to go in a different direction and then all of a sudden she came across Florida and was in the gulf and was headed straight for us and she looked really big, you know she was different looking from any of the hurricanes we had been through since Haley had been Governor, I think I was Ivan and Georges or...

Billy Watkins: When you say it looked different, do you mean just from what you had seen on the Weather Channel or....

Mrs. Barbour: Just on The Weather Channel and Dr. Mayfield had called us at our home in Yazoo City and had actually waked us up to tell us this storm was Camille-like.

Billy Watkins: Oh, those are two words you don't want to hear.

Mrs. Barbour: No.

Billy Watkins: You talk about your faith and being in the right place where you're supposed to be and that kind of thing. Where does that faith come from? Where did it originate? I mean, were you little when you come to know the Lord, or what?

Mrs. Barbour: I was just raised in a Christian home. You know, I guess it's different when you were raised in a Christian home. My mother was a very strong Christian lady. I have a twin sister and we just, you know, we were in church 5 or 6 hours on Sundays and you know in the choir and during the week did Girl's Auxiliary, and we grew up with a Christian background. I was raised in the Baptist Church, accepted Christ as my savior when I was nine. Now why is that coming into play?

Billy Watkins: I don't know...

Mrs. Barbour: Just gives you a little background?

Billy Watkins: Yeah, I think it's a neat thing.

Mrs. Barbour: You think you're a Christian?

Billy Watkins: Absolutely, and as a matter of fact, I think I was 9 too, I was 8 or 9.

Mrs. Barbour: You were baptized too?

Billy Watkins: Mmhm. I was, sure was. My Mom thought I was too young to walk the aisle you know and all that.

Mrs. Barbour: Well Marie and I did it together, so I guess we had more courage, but I remember really being moved.

Billy Watkins: Was it during a revival or just a regular service?

Mrs. Barbour: I think it was just during a revival.

Billy Watkins: So you feel you've had your life sorta planned for you for a long time?

Mrs. Barbour: I don't think I was that way, but this is one time that I can look back and see why we were in the places that we were in, as far as, why I was on the Coast, because I got so much more out of this as far as a blessing and fulfillment than I could ever give the people down there.

Billy Watkins: I thought it was interesting when I reading the magazine that Pete and them had brought up here yesterday and I was reading your biography on the web site and your new grandchild Ava Gray was born August 27 of 2007, which was almost the second anniversary of Katrina and I was just wondering when she was born, did you think about what a high this is and what a special moment this is in my life and think back to almost it was 2 years ago that day that you were getting ready for one of the toughest moments that ya'll would ever go through? Did you ever think about that?

Mrs. Barbour: I did, and really I think if it had been more convenient and probably not the Katrina two-year anniversary, it could have been she would have been born on the 29th. Haley and I just lost a dear, dear, more than a friend, more like a family member, whose birthday was the 29th.

Billy Watkins: Oh gosh!

Mrs. Barbour: We don't know if he's 94, 95, 96 – we have reports it's 1912, 1913, 1914. Smitty.

Billy Watkins: Well, maybe he was 39 for several years.

Mrs. Barbour: I should have been giving him his birthday present on the 29th when I was on the way to the Coast, so I had mixed emotions about where I should be on that day, but now I'm glad God led me to the coast.

Billy Watkins: Do you remember, I know you were born in Monroeville, Alabama, and ya'll moved to Canton when you were a little girl.

Mrs. Barbour: Not really, when we were in high school.

Billy Watkins: In high school? Ok, what brought ya'll from Alabama to Mississippi? What made you a "Mississippi Woman?"

Mrs. Barbour: Business, my dad was in the timber business and he bought a creosoting plant there.

Billy Watkins? Ok, and if I read this right in a story that was done way back during the Republican Convention in San Diego.

Mrs. Barbour: Oh, my goodness.

Billy Watkins: It was a story a while back, but it was really the first time I'd read this, but I read that you met Governor Barbour on a golf course?

Mrs. Barbour: I did.

Billy Watkins: Would you recount that story for us?

Mrs. Barbour: Okay. I think it was just like a Sunday afternoon or an afternoon in the summer and my sister and I were out there, I was actually out there with a friend, a mutual friend, of ours, and Haley was coming with his friend, to borrow money – not Haley borrow money, but his friend Sterling came and was going to borrow money from his sister, who was a friend of mine. So, we just met on the golf course, and I was introduced to him, and he sat there and visited with me about Ole Miss, I was going to Ole Miss that fall and that's how we met, and then that friend actually called me and asked me to go out with Haley, Haley didn't call me. I think that's interesting!

Billy Watkins: Did he have her do that, or do you know that to this day?

Mrs. Barbour: No, he had Sterling Kane, his guy friend, you know the young man he was there with. Sterling came, he was a year older than I was in Canton, who died from leukemia later, when he was about 24. That's one reason our son Sterling is named after him. Old family friend of Haley's.

Billy Watkins: Okay.

Mrs. Barbour: But, Sterling Kane was needing to borrow money from his sister.

Billy Watkins: And when did you know that this really might be the guy, you know, this really might be the one for me?

Mrs. Barbour: Oh, it took a long time...it took a while. I've said this in writing, it was not love at first sight!

Billy Watkins: Not even on his part?

Mrs. Barbour: I don't know about his part, you'll have to ask him about that.

Billy Watkins: Ok. What led you to believe that this is the guy, this is the one?

Mrs. Barbour: We dated on and off for about two years, mostly on.

Billy Watkins: You had no idea back then that, hey, one day, I might be in politics, I might be even the First Lady?

Mrs. Barbour: No, I just didn't think about that. I knew Haley was interested in politics. To me he was a great listener and a great friend. We were friends before, I considered us friends before I was in love with him, he was a good, good friend.

Billy Watkins: Isn't that kind of a special thing, to be real good friends first?

Mrs. Barbour: I think it is, it's also helped us with our commitment to our marriage, I mean marriage is just not an easy thing. Are you married?

Billy Watkins: Oh, I am, I am. I've got three children, I'm real married.

Mrs. Barbour: How long have you been married?

Billy Watkins: Ah, twenty, ah, I'm glad Susan's not sitting here. Ah, twenty-seven years.

Mrs. Barbour: We're almost 36. Thirty-six and counting, and it doesn't get any easier.

Billy Watkins: It doesn't, I think you have to work harder actually.

Mrs. Barbour: You do.

Billy Watkins: But, it's worth it, it's really worth it.

Mrs. Barbour: So, I'd never heard of Yazoo City, I mean, even being from Canton, because I moved there into the 10th grade. They had quit playing Yazoo City on Thanksgiving, or whenever they used to.

Billy Watkins: Oh, they did used to, that's right.

Mrs. Barbour: I heard that from Haley a lot of years. They were real rivals.

Billy Watkins: This is one of the things I've always wanted to ask, you were living a pretty peaceful life in Yazoo City, at the lake.

Mrs. Barbour: Private, no, we didn't live at the lake

Billy Watkins: Yea, private, right. But, to go from Yazoo City and a pretty private life for yourself to First Lady, what did you do from the time that Governor Barbour said "I'm thinking about running, what do you think," to the time he was sworn in. What does one do to prepare for that?

Mrs. Barbour: You pray a lot, and you cry. I prayed a lot and then I cried a lot, and then I just tried to do what would be best. First of all, I fought Security. You know I still wanted to drive myself. I thought I could drive myself, like I did in the campaign. I drove myself until the last couple of months in the campaign, and then we had a young lady, Katie, and if there were ten Katie's, I would take them all right now, because we got to the places we needed to go and she was actually very capable and very good help. But, you know I like my independence and I like my privacy. You know we commuted back and forth from Yazoo City for a long time, but that's kind of how we did during the campaign, so the transition, I guess, for Haley and for his planning, doing his plans and his budget, and getting his administration ready, was a transition time for me too. So that's when I realized I liked the business side of stuff, and I've always managed our stuff. So it was a natural transition for me to sit and learn. I mean all I did for the first year and a half was listen and learn. That's all I tried to do. So, yes, it went from being very private to being a private life that I felt I had a little more control over to being a public life where I had less control, but I had a chance and an opportunity to really maybe make a difference in someone's life, and my goal was if I can help one person in the next four years, or make a difference in one person's life, then what Haley has done, and what people have elected him to do, then maybe that would be something I could give back to the people of the State of Mississippi.

Billy Watkins: Was it a deal where it took a little while for him to get you to see this vision? I mean, I guess what I'm saying is did it take a while for him to talk you into this and say yeah, let's do it?

Mrs. Barbour: As far as running?

Billy Watkins: Yes.

Mrs. Barbour: He tested the water for a year to see if there was an appetite for him to run, if the people in Mississippi really realized, or needed someone else to come in and run, and change the direction of the state. So, in that year, he was commuting even more from Washington to Mississippi, but he was still not in Yazoo City, he was going around to different areas of the state. Mostly talking to Republicans and seeing what was really going on here. So that was in '02. Then in '03 --- I actually, Billy, don't remember him ever asking me, I just remember there was a transition, and he was a candidate, and announcing, so, I tagged along and went on the ride with him.

Billy Watkins: Now, when you said you did a lot of praying and a lot of crying, what were the tears about?

Mrs. Barbour: Public life, and him being right here in Mississippi, and also the criticisms that were being thrown out, the accusations, you know they are offensive to my boys and to me.

Billy Watkins: I have thought many times, I mean, my wife is a very sweet, loving, caring person, but I think if someone said anything bad about me, I think she would scratch their eyes out, or she would want to. I've tried to put myself in the public eye, like ya'll are in the public eye – when someone says something about Governor Barbour, how do you, it has to hurt, but how do you keep it from just completely getting to you, how do handle that?

Mrs. Barbour: I'll read the Clarion Ledger...no seriously, I really don't look at it...when you work for Ronald Reagan, and people would criticize him, I mean I would hear criticisms then, and it would get under my skin and I found myself defending him. Even when Haley was in Washington working for Ronald Reagan, I took it as a, I'm just sensitive and very thin skinned, and I took it that when people criticized Ronald Reagan they were criticizing my husband because that's who he was working for. Same thing goes during the campaign. It's just that it got to be so much, I realized that when he was seriously running and then when he was elected, that you're not going to please all of the people any of the time. So it's going to be a certain amount of criticisms every day and you just have to ignore them to a certain degree. That's the only way you can live with him. I wish I could explain everything that is ever said about him. I am that way, I am a very calm, laid back type person. But when you talk about my husband and my children, I do get very defensive, and I think any mother and wife would.

Billy Watkins: I can understand that totally. Have you ever talked to Mrs. Bush or did you ever talk to Mrs. Reagan about that, about how to handle that?

Mrs. Barbour: No.

Billy Watkins: Ever came up?

Mrs. Barbour: Maybe Barbara Bush, but Laura and W were just kind of our friends before he was even Governor, you know, just casual friends, it was always at a ballgame and then when they were actually running, I think criticisms got to her, but I'm sure the more you are around it the more you have to ignore it, because the more involved you are the more criticisms there are. Just human nature.

Billy Watkins: Did Mrs. Barbara Bush, did she give you any advice?

Mrs. Barbour: Just ignore it.

Billy Watkins: You and Deuce and Michael Rubenstein have gotten more air time than I think David Letterman and Jay Leno put together on this walking campaign. But, that's something you were doing well before the campaign, I mean, you've always been, you were always active as far as walking and exercising and stuff weren't you?

Mrs. Barbour: Right, and the older I've gotten, the more it's been just walking because your joints wear out. But, walking has been something that has always been prescribed for me for my back and then as time went on, it's a great way to get rid of stress, even if you do other things. It's just something you can do. Blue Cross came to meet with me and Haley over a year ago, and I just think they are very visionary in how they want to approach some of the health problems in Mississippi in that it's more of a preventative approach and that they are aware of the health care cost. They are doing this with the state employees which tied in great with Haley's healthy Mississippi initiative. You know, everything I've ever tried to participate in has been directed toward initiatives or directives that are not getting all the attention they should or people that are falling through the cracks or gaps in state government, so this is just such a positive way to affect Mississippians as a whole to try and work on problems that exist for a lot of different reasons that we have those problems. I mean we enjoy a great style of living here, and all of this is going to take some life style changes and different choices in our lives, and with a few small changes in eating habits with a little exercise, we can make a dent in some of our health problems. You know, it turns out that Haley couldn't be in the last ad, because he's a candidate, and I'm not a candidate and I got to go be with Michael and Deuce. It's a great lesson in life, to just take three short words, and it sticks with people.

Billy Watkins: How much do you have people say that to you when you're around?

Mrs. Barbour: Oh, I've gotten more feedback from that than anything I've participated in in the last four years.

Billy Watkins: Wow.

Mrs. Barbour: I'm the Let's Go Walking lady. I mean, the kids in the schools and everything. I mean, it's just wonderful, you go to community walks and you have 18 month olds and 96 year olds walking. It's a great experience.

Billy Watkins: Did I read somewhere that you used to walk up to 6 miles a day.

Mrs. Barbour: I used to walk probably 5 times a week at least 5 miles a day. I'd try to do 3 in the morning and 2 ½ in the afternoon or 3 ½ in the morning and 2 in the afternoon.

Billy Watkins: Does it help you clear your head?

Mrs. Barbour: It does, that's one reason the P.E. back in schools and a lot of the schools are starting the walking campaigns. Of course, kids can walk and move a lot of different places we can't, while they are walking.

Billy Watkins: We've talked that you met Governor Barbour on the golf course, and I've heard that you are a pretty good golfer.

Mrs. Barbour: I was after the boys graduated and were off on their own, I took golf back up again. I'd had a serious back problem and my back was fixed in '96 and they said I golf would be a great thing I could take up again.

Billy Watkins: How is your back, I was going to ask that?

Mrs. Barbour: I had to have that again, well, they replaced the apparatus. It's good, I mean it's an old back. We don't have to write about my back.

Billy Watkins: But, are you going okay, I know maybe you've had a foot problem and a back problem. I wanted to ask again how are you doing.

Mrs. Barbour: I'm doing good. Walking is good for me.

Billy Watkins: Now, let me go back to the golf. Why did you pick golf of all things?

Mrs. Barbour: Because I was too old for tennis.

Billy Watkins: No, you're not.

Mrs. Barbour: I picked golf, because I played it when Haley and I were first married. I'd taken it in college and it was something I could do in Yazoo City. You know, I spent so much of my time in Yazoo City going to ballgames for my kids. And if I was not going to move up to Washington, which Haley wanted me to stay down here. And it's true, I think it kept him normal, if anyone's normal, that he did come home to Mississippi on weekends. You know, our opponent four years ago said he moved back down here to run for Governor. That was false. We've lived in Yazoo City our whole married life except for about eight months we lived in Jackson. He's always done that. After the kids were out of high school, I thought it would be good for me to move up there and get some kind of, do some volunteer work, or work with one of the Congressmen and be more involved with his life up there, but he was determined we were still going to live in Yazoo City. I guess I took up golf, because that was something I could play and meet new women, and I took it up with a vengeance. I worked at it probably six or seven hours a day.

Billy Watkins: Good gracious. This was when?

Mrs. Barbour: Starting in, I guess the summer of '97. I ended up playing a lot of tournament golf. I was good, Billy.

Billy Watkins: I believe that. Six or seven hours a day, I believe that. You know what, people ask me do I play anymore because it's addictive. It's hard for me just to play and not go back and want to play the next day and the next day.

Mrs. Barbour: Well, and it's a hard game to learn. What's your handicap?

Billy Watkins: I never had it taken?

Mrs. Barbour: You never had it taken?

Billy Watkins: I never had it measured, or scored or whatever, you know.

Mrs. Barbour: You were supposed to do that. All you do is write it down and put it in a computer.

Billy Watkins: I never got that serious about it, I guess. Maybe I didn't want to know. I mean I shoot about 80's, every once in a while a little lower than that. It got to be where it was fun, and I could play bogey golf. But, I got a feeling you were a lot better than that.

Mrs. Barbour: Well, it took a lot for me to get to bogey golf, because I had not played in 20 years. And I was getting older and I felt like I had to do it as well as I could and as short a length of time as I could.

Billy Watkins: Where did you play in Yazoo City?

Mrs. Barbour: I would practice at the Yazoo County Country Club. I walked there every morning. I mean I didn't walk to it but I walked by it.

Billy Watkins: They say it's better for you to walk on a golf course than to walk on streets and stuff --- way better for your joints. But there was something in one of the articles, I cannot remember which one I read, but I just made a note of it here, as a matter of fact it was the first note I made. It was where you were able to pilot a power boat and Governor Barbour was on the back seat behind you and what a rush it was to drive those things. Do you remember that?

Mrs. Barbour: Yes, I remember that. The year before, I piloted one and went a lot faster when they let Haley ride in the backseat. So I still have a record I have to beat. I don't know if they're going to really let me get in one of those big ones again. I think I'm adventurous, Billy.

Billy Watkins: Oh, okay, nothing wrong with that. Just called having fun.

Mrs. Barbour: One life to live.

Billy Watkins: These are things I don't know, so just bear with me for a minute, because I guess I could ask Pete when we get through. Your Mom, is she still living?

Mrs. Barbour: My Mom died before my oldest was born. She died when she was 51. She died of lung cancer.

Billy Watkins: Oh my gosh! And that would have been in what year?

Mrs. Barbour: That was '74.

Billy Watkins: What about your Dad?

Mrs. Barbour: He died in '83.

Billy Watkins: Ok. That's a tough thing when both parents are gone.

Mrs. Barbour: It is and Haley's mother had died the year before my Mom. Of course his Dad died when he was about 2 ½. We didn't have the grandparents.

Billy Watkins: This may sound like a dumb questions, but how has that affected you? She died a very young woman.

Mrs. Barbour: I think Mothers are missed tremendously no matter what age you lose them, but I don't know I feel especially badly that I didn't have children when my Mom was alive, because I have a of things I'd like to thank her for. That I actually didn't understand until I had a child. You know, the reasons why she disciplined us or seemed so strict at times. You know, just some of those things you would like to thank her for. Because you understand them after you have a child.

Billy Watkins: Have your children come to realize why you disciplined them? I mean are they old enough now to understand and say you know, now I know why. They've got children of their own.

Mrs. Barbour: Yeah, they both, I hope they're learning. I'm waiting for my thank you.

Billy Watkins: They're learning, I guarantee you. I keep telling mine, you know, you'll know, well my daughter has a child, but I keep telling my sons, you won't understand until you have a child of your own.

Mrs. Barbour: And the older they get, you know...our oldest son has two now, and I think they're just really tired right now. But the older the 21 month old gets, I think he sees the harder it is to control them. Because they actually have to tell him no, and you know, his problems and watching him are getting harder and bigger. And the older they get, the bigger the problems, the more complicated the problems, and the more there are.

Billy Watkins: How are you enjoying being a grandmother?

Mrs. Barbour: I like it. I think it's all it's been cracked up to be. I used to think people were just so silly saying they could hardly wait to be grandparents, because I was

fortunate enough to be a Mom at home. So I thought, well, I've done that. We're too busy, and y'all have children, wait four or five years to have your children. They've married since 2004 and one has two children and the other has one. I mean the Barbour family...our immediate Barbour family has grown tremendously in the four years Haley has been Governor.

Billy Watkins: That's a good thing.

Mrs. Barbour: Grown and you know....

Billy Watkins: I've been at functions where y'all are there and -- I remember it was at the Morgan Freeman thing over here at the art museum, I think, I can't remember what it was, but Governor Barbour was making a speech and maybe, as a human will do, forgot some little bitty thing, and I think may you said something like, wouldn't you like to say, and he said, yes, I would.

Pete Smith: He was proclaiming it Morgan Freeman Day.

Billy Watkins: That's right, that's exactly right. And, Mrs. Barbour, sort of kind of reminded him of it. And I thought, that's pretty cool. You know, to have somebody there to say that, and to remind him of that and, but how much do you say, are there times that you say, imply that, Honey, you should not have said that, or honey, maybe you should look at it this way. How much do you do that?

Mrs. Barbour: I think that's kinda personal.

Billy Watkins: Well....

Mrs. Barbour: I'll tell you the one time that I felt like that we have worked as a team a whole lot, and that was during Katrina because I went to the Coast a lot. He had to be here doing other things, going to Washington to start planning and trying to work on how the money would come in and the plans for that, and other details where he couldn't be on the coast every day. And I did get his undivided attention the days I would come in with special needs for different people, and where the gaps were and the different things about FEMA/MEHA and all the agencies that were down there and what was happening and how it was really working and what the needs really were. I mean, he was all ears. And the other question you asked is just a very personal question.

Pete Smith: Hey, Billy, I was just going to let you know we probably have time for one more. She's got another deal here.

Billy Watkins: I appreciate it. I'll ask one more. I read, I'm sorry?

Mrs. Barbour: We disagree just like everybody. I mean, Haley says all the time, you know, even Marsha and I can't agree on everything. We're going to all disagree about some things. That's just human nature.

Billy Watkins: This is sort of one of those ironic sorts of questions. When you were on the Coast, I remember reading this, and nature was calling, and you knocked on someone's door and you said, hi, I'm Marsha Barbour, and that person said, I'm Katrina. Do you remember that?

Mrs. Barbour: I do.

Billy Watkins: What did that, after you know, I mean at the time, it was probably, well, that's pretty ironic and all that.

Mrs. Barbour: No, I told her, I told her, I said, you just don't know what havoc you've played on....

Billy Watkins: But, looking back, what are the odds, really, what are the odds of that happening, and did you think that is any kind of message of you're right where you're supposed to be?

Mrs. Barbour: I didn't take it as that message, but I did tell her that she had really played havoc on where I had come from. I mean, I was on my way from Hattiesburg to the Coast and we would sometimes go 100 yards in an hour and I mean, you know, there weren't that many women in the convoy, and so there was this, I guess it was in one of the little turn lanes, and I could see – it was right before dark, so I asked someone if they would take me up there so I could go to the restroom and one of the narcotics guys went up and said, Hi, I'm Wade Parham with the Bureau of Narcotics, scared her to death, I said, I'm Marsha Barbour, it's okay, I just want to borrow your restroom. She was out looking at all of her trees down and she had no electricity and she said, oh, that's fine, come on in, and I said, what's your name, and she said, Katrina. And I said, you just don't know what you have just done!!! I've got to go back and find her.

Billy Watkins: Do you think it registered on her who you were?

Mrs. Barbour: No, no, no, no.

Billy Watkins: You don't think she knew that you were Governor Barbour's wife?

Mrs. Barbour: No, I just said Marsha Barbour. No one down there for a month on the Coast ...

Billy Watkins: ... knew who you were?

Mrs. Barbour: Right.

Billy Watkins: I think somehow you'd be right about that.

Mrs. Barbour:Would bring them water, or bring them MREs or bring them baby formula, or whatever. I was someone, literally, in a pickup truck, with a couple of men.

Billy Watkins: Well, thank you for agreeing to do this, and I appreciate it and I promise to treat the story with respect.

Mrs. Barbour: I don't feel like you've gotten much today. I just can't imagine what you're going to write, Billy, out of this.

Billy Watkins: You know what, I don't either. I have, I mean it's kind of a running joke around here, they'll say, what's your story going to be about and what's your lead going to be, and I'll say I have no idea. I really don't ever know what I'm going to write until I put my hands on the keys and I kinda write, but I promise I will not misquote you, or anything like that, and I appreciate your taking time to do this. I did read in a *Washington Post* story where you still give reporters the benefit of the doubt, so I appreciate your doing that with me.

Mrs. Barbour: That I still what?

Billy Watkins: That you still give reporters the benefit of the doubt. And I think he was saying it in a joking way. But I do appreciate it.

Mrs. Barbour: I like to have faith in people and trust them. Until they give me a reason not to trust them.

Billy Watkins: Well, I'll try my best not to do that.

Mrs. Barbour: Okay, because I've sat with Haley and several editorial boards across the state and I have to say I'm not sure that y'all get things exactly right over there.

Billy Watkins: No comment.

Mrs. Barbour: I'm listening to the same things that y'all are and I don't read it that way.

Billy Watkins: No comment.

Mrs. Barbour: But since youI'm going to trust you.

Billy Watkins: I try to sit in my cubicle and do my little....

Mrs. Barbour: You know, I'm sitting here in my office and I'm looking at my picture with my bears, you know, I also got to meet, and this job does give you some opportunities that you normally wouldn't get – I got to go and meet some little black cub bears. So, I do whatever I can for wildlife, because I love, I feel like I'm more normal when I'm outside and that's one thing I miss about taking on such an inside job, but

Billy Watkins: You put collars on them, didn't you?

Mrs. Barbour: They put the collars on them, but I got to hold them while they, I guess they tagged them so they can keep up with them, and they're going fine. I've seen some pictures of them since then.

Billy Watkins: I bet they've grown.

Mrs. Barbour: Oh, they've grown, I don't think I could hold them now. They would have to tranquilize them. But they smell so sweet.

Billy Watkins: Do they really?

Mrs. Barbour: They do, they have a really sweet smell, which...

Billy Watkins: That's a surprise.

Mrs. Barbour: Especially since they're outdoors.

Billy Watkins: Not as good as those grandchildren, I bet, though.

Mrs. Barbour: Depends on the diaper.

Billy Watkins: I really meant the babies.

Mrs. Barbour: The babies smell great.

Billy Watkins: That's what I told my daughter. I said, look, all I want to do is smell his little head. You know, it just a unique...

Mrs. Barbour: See you have daughters, I have sons.

Billy Watkins: Well, I've got one daughter and two sons, and she had a boy last February, so I'm a granddaddy, and I'm fixing to be a granddaddy again.

Mrs. Barbour: Inaudible. You're trying to keep up with us.

Billy Watkins: You're right, I mean I agree with you 100%. I always thought people were silly and crazy, then it happened and it's like.

Mrs. Barbour: You know I haven't thought about my boys being babies in a long time and you know,

Billy Watkins: Takes you back, doesn't it?

Mrs. Barbour: It does.

Billy Watkins: Well, thank you for your time, very much.

Mrs. Barbour: And when is this coming out?

Billy Watkins: Sunday, I hope. Sunday is the day that we've got it pegged for.